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| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|--|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 10/716,408 | 11/20/2003 | Yasushi Sugawara | JEL30682B | 5554 |
| 24257 | 7590 | 10/26/2006 | EXAMINER | |
| STEVENS DAVIS MILLER & MOSHER, LLP 1615 L STREET, NW SUITE 850 WASHINGTON, DC 20036 | | | | DOVE, TRACY MAE |
| ART UNIT | | PAPER NUMBER | | |
| | | 1745 | | |

DATE MAILED: 10/26/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Office Action Summary | Application No. | Applicant(s) |
| | 10/716,408 | SUGAWARA ET AL. |
| | Examiner | Art Unit |
| | Tracy Dove | 1745 |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 November 2003.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 4-11 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 4-11 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. 09/240,614.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>2/2/04</u> . | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| | 6) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>IDS 11/20/03</u> |

DETAILED ACTION

Priority

Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

Information Disclosure Statement

The information disclosure statements (IDS) submitted on 11/20/03 and 2/2/04 have been considered by the examiner.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 4 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 4 and 11 recite the limitation "said initial temperature". There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 4-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Nezu et al., US 5,994,426.

Nezu teaches a fuel cell comprising a solid polymer electrolyte membrane and gas diffusion electrodes holding the membrane therebetween. The component parts of the fuel cell (includes membrane held between electrodes) were placed on a hot pressing machine whose temperature had been adjusted to 100°C in advance. The component parts were subjected to a pressure of 20 kgf/cm² at 100°C for 5 minutes. Then, further subjected to a pressure of 20 kfg/cm² at 132.5°C for 5 minutes. Then, further subjected to a pressure of 20 kfg/cm² at 165°C for 5 minutes. Thereafter, the pressure was increased to 80 kgf/cm² and was held thereat for 90 seconds (12:65-13:22).

Thus the claims are anticipated.

Note the disclosed pressure of 20 kfg/cm² of Nezu is considered the “first pressure” of the claimed invention and the disclosed pressure of 80 kgf/cm² of Nezu is considered the “bonding pressure” of the claimed invention. Nezu teaches a temperature of 165°C, which is considered the “bonding temperature” of the claimed invention. The electrode assembly of Nezu inherently has “an initial temperature” before being subjected to heating.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Grot (US5,707,755) teaches a membrane electrode assembly is hot pressed to bond the electrodes to the membrane. For membrane electrode assemblies utilizing Nafion® as the membrane, hot-pressing will typically be effected at a temperature of about 150C to about 200C and a pressure of about 200 to about 1000 psi (5:37-44).

Art Unit: 1745

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Tracy Dove whose telephone number is 571-272-1285. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday (9:00-7:30).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Pat Ryan can be reached on 571-272-1292. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

October 25, 2006



TRACY DOVE
PRIMARY EXAMINER